Seasonal peak and fall in payroll jobs

Media Release

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Source:
Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, Week ending 18 December 2021

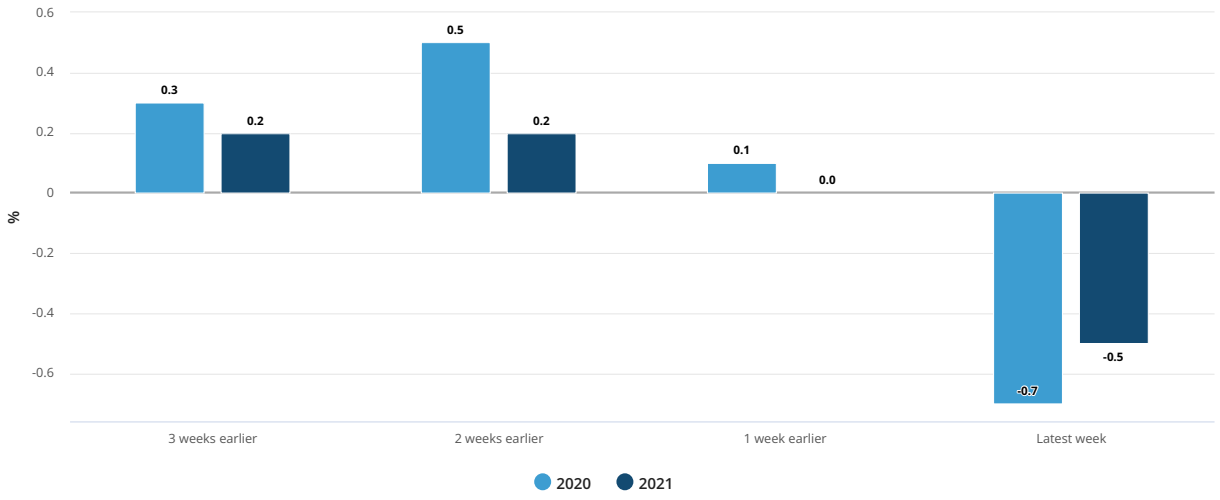
Payroll jobs fell by 0.5 per cent in the fortnight to 18 December 2021, following a rise of 0.3 per cent in the previous fortnight, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: “The first half of December is a seasonal peak for jobs each year, followed by a seasonal fall around the summer school holidays.

“In 2021, payroll jobs peaked in the week ending 4 December, which was around one week earlier than in 2020. The peak in 2021 was 2.9 per cent higher than in December 2020.

“The week-to-week changes in each of the last four weeks of data showed a relatively similar pattern to 2020, though they were smaller in 2021."

Weekly percentage change in payroll jobs, 2020 and 2021 (a)



a. The latest week in 2020 refers to the week ending 19 December 2020, with earlier weeks referring to 12 December, 5 December and 28 November 2020. For 2021 the latest week is 18 December 2021 with earlier weeks of 11 December, 4 December and 27 November 2021.

States and territories

“There was a fall in payroll jobs in all states and territories in the fortnight to 18 December, ranging from a 0.8 per cent fall in the Northern Territory to a 0.1 per cent fall in Victoria.” Mr Jarvis said.

“At 18 December, payroll jobs were higher than a year ago in all states and territories, highlighting the extent of recovery in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory over the previous two months, following the end of the Delta period lockdowns. Compared to 19 December 2020, payroll jobs had increased the most in Western Australia (5.3 per cent), while the smallest increase was in New South Wales (1.3 per cent).”

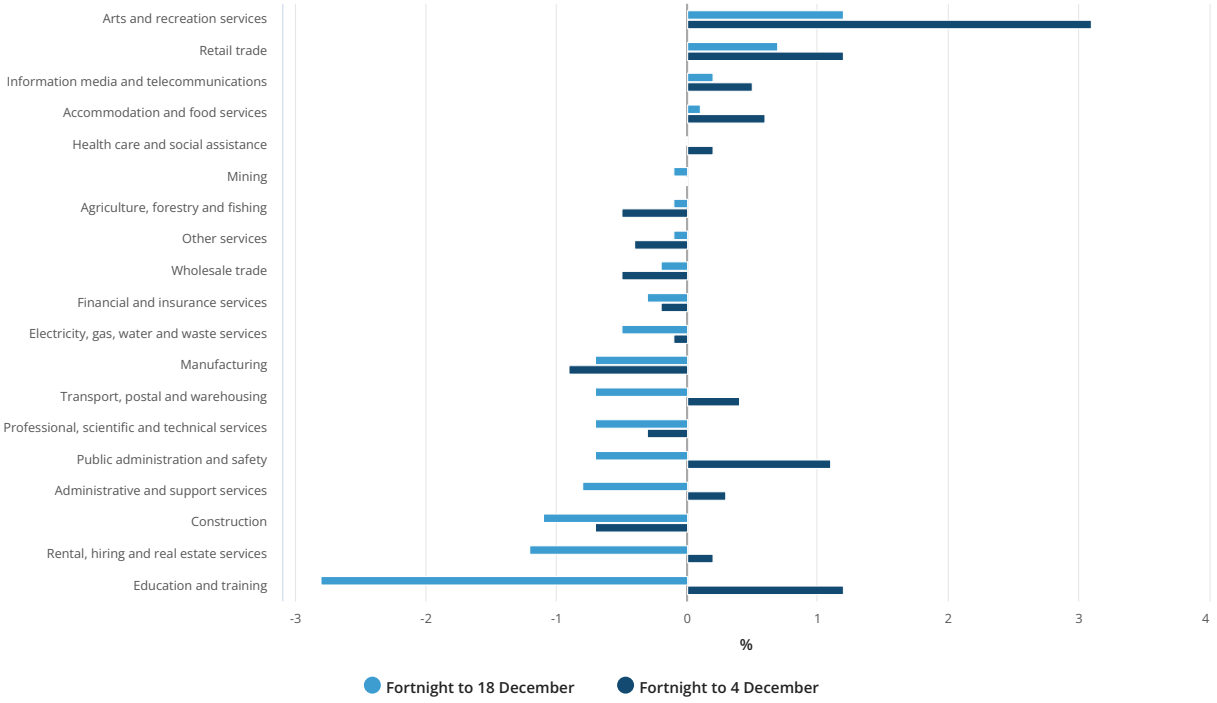
Industries

The seasonal fall in payroll jobs in December was heavily influenced by the Education and

training industry, which accounted for over a third of the total fall (38.2 per cent). The fortnightly fall in payroll jobs in that industry (2.8 per cent) was slightly less than the same period a year earlier (3.9 per cent).

Payroll jobs increased in only four of the nineteen industries over the latest fortnight, with the largest rise in Arts and recreation services (1.2 per cent), followed by Retail trade (0.7 per cent), Information media and telecommunications (0.2 per cent) and Accommodation and food services (0.1 per cent).

Percentage change in payroll jobs, by industry (a)



a. Industries ranked by percentage change in the latest fortnight.

December is a seasonal peak for payroll jobs worked by 15-19 year olds, with six out of ten (61.3 per cent) additional jobs worked by teenagers in the Retail trade and Accommodation and food services industries.

Payroll jobs only include jobs where a person was paid through the payroll in a pay period. Payroll job falls can include employees who remained attached to their job but were temporarily stood down and not paid by their employer.

The ABS acknowledges the continued support from the Australian Taxation Office in enabling the ABS to produce weekly insights into the Australian labour market.

Media notes

- The latest data is for the week ending 18 December, which was prior to large numbers of COVID cases associated with the Omicron variant. Labour Force statistics for December also relate to a similar period, with a reference period covering 28 November to 11 December.
- Payroll jobs are not seasonally adjusted, which generally requires at least three years of data. The seasonal changes accounted for in the longstanding Labour Force statistics series should be considered when interpreting impacts and recovery in employment statistics through the COVID-19 period.
- Payroll jobs are predominantly employee jobs paid through payrolls. Some industries, such as Agriculture, forestry and fishing and Construction have high proportions of owner managers. For more information, see the Scope and coverage section of the Methodology (/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-18-december-2021) of this release.
- In each release, as more complete data are received, payroll jobs and wages estimates are revised. Releases with reference weeks which coincide with the start of month involve higher rates of imputation for payroll jobs with monthly pay frequencies. This can contribute to greater revisions in subsequent releases. Industries with higher proportions of monthly pay frequencies, such as Mining, are particularly affected.
- While the ABS accounts for employees being paid with different frequencies, additional reporting activity may flow through to published estimates at some points of the year (such as the end of the financial year).
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